

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Nevada County Transportation Commission

FROM: Daniel B. Landon, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Executive Director's Report for March 21, 2007 Meeting

DATE: March 10, 2007

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### 1. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MITIGATION FEE UPDATE

The 2030 traffic model has been completed and Nevada County's Department of Transportation and Sanitation staff completed an initial review on March 7<sup>th</sup>. The model files will now be given to Fehr and Peers who will accomplish a detailed review of the demographics, model assumptions, and RTMF network. Following their review, Fehr and Peers will identify future deficiencies and transportation needs and use that information to update the Capital Improvement Program.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, Darren Henderson and Ayelet Ezran with PB Americas, Inc. conducted a stakeholders meeting to review their scope of work, and to confirm policy and program assumptions that will be considered during the RTMF Update process. The following is a brief summary of the twelve policy issues identified and discussed during the meeting:

1. Fee Differentiation by Zone: Will consider compressing 8 zones down to about 4 zones. Also, consider alternatives to the project-by-project select link analysis methodology previously used.
2. Fee Exemptions and Differentiation by Land Use: Consider a proposal to differentiate residential and non-residential fee levels, and re-assign a portion of non-residential fees to residential in zones 2-7, in lieu of an exemption for retail land-uses in those zones.
3. Existing Need: A methodology for accounting for the impact of existing development is necessary and will be incorporated in this update.
4. Time Period Analyzed: Continue to use peak demand at given locations to size needed improvements, and to use daily travel as a basis to set fee levels.
5. Substitute Projects: The Capital Improvement Program should be expanded to include the full range of regional improvement needs during this update. This will eliminate the need for substitute projects.
6. Fee Credits: In keeping with development fee laws, continue to provide fee credits or project cost adjustments for RTMF projects completed using alternative means.

7. Fee per Trip and Generation Rates: Maintain current policy of determining fee obligation based on a fee-per-trip, and using the most recent ITE trip generation rates.
8. Horizon Year: Utilize the most recent demographic data as the basis for establishing the program base year and horizon year (i.e. 2006 and 2030).
9. Level of Service Standard: Maintain LOS D as the minimum acceptable level-of-service threshold for RTMF projects.
10. Minimum Criteria for Inclusion in Capital Improvement Program: Continue using minimum criteria to identify projects eligible for RTMF funding, and consider expanding the criteria to include segment LOS, in addition to intersection LOS. Also, consider including all regional facilities, state highways, and new county or city roads. These criteria will need to be developed and implemented by Fehr and Peers as part of the CIP update.
11. Annual Review and Cost Escalation: The RTMF program needs to be reviewed on an annual basis to account for fee collection and expenditures, and to prioritize project implementation in accordance with development patterns. The RTMF Update needs to provide for annual adjustments to account for inflation.
12. Administrative Costs: Integrate administrative costs as part of the program fee calculation.

Other General Comments Discussed:

- a. Consider a methodology that will provide some level of return to source.
- b. Look at ways to deal with low project cost estimates by adding a contingency factor to CIP cost estimates.
- c. Consider tiering/prioritization of projects in the CIP, or establish a “set-aside” for certain large projects (e.g. Dorsey Drive Interchange).

2. DORSEY DRIVE INTERCHANGE

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires that a “Value Analysis” be done for every project costing more than \$25 million. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>, I participated in a Caltrans Value Analysis Study for the Dorsey Drive Interchange project. The purpose of a Value Analysis is to enhance the value of a project by increasing benefit and/or eliminating unnecessary cost. During the Value Analysis process, the study team recommended the following nine alternatives for consideration:

- 1) Additional consideration regarding the life cycle cost associated with constructing a new overcrossing bridge vs. widening the existing bridge.
- 2) Elimination of a thin overlay on the freeway pavement.
- 3) Eliminate inside shoulder widening on the freeway median.
- 4) Reduction of the size and number of retaining walls, where possible.
- 5) Minor adjustment of the westbound off-ramp alignment.
- 6) Reevaluation of noise criteria related to the number and size of soundwalls proposed.
- 7) Reduction of travel lane widths on Dorsey Drive from 12 feet to 11 feet wide.
- 8) Reduction of the width of the median on Dorsey Drive west of the overcrossing.
- 9) Reduction of the width of freeway shoulders from 10 feet to 8 feet.

The Value Analysis facilitator will submit a formal report to Caltrans District 3 to review the recommendations and determine which ones can be implemented. In the meantime, Caltrans is moving forward with design and are updating the Project Report and Environmental Document to reflect the recent modifications to the project.

3. SR 89 "MOUSEHOLE"

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the Truckee Town Council reviewed and validated the purpose and need for the SR 89 "Mousehole" project, and provided direction to staff and Caltrans regarding the alternatives they wanted studied further as part of the current Project Approval and Environmental Document process. The Council agreed that the identified needs for the project are:

- Traffic volumes exceed capacity during peak periods.
- The current facility has unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Traffic backups hinder emergency vehicle operations.
- Current clearance does not allow for passage of all types of trucks.

Recommendations adopted by the Council included:

- Pursue a "long term" improvement.
- Structure should accommodate future traffic volumes.
- Standard shoulders should be provided on both sides of the roadway.
- Pedestrian facilities should be provided on both sides of the roadway.
- Suspend further analysis of alternatives 2 and 3 (these alternatives involve constructing additional tunnels for vehicle traffic under the railroad).
- Continue study of a pedestrian tunnel as a low cost alternative.

4. EAST MAIN ST./IDAHO-MARYLAND RD. INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Grass Valley City Engineer, Tim Kiser, reports that design of the roundabout project is 50% complete and a consultant is being selected to complete environmental documentation for the project. Plans for relocation of utilities are underway.

5. BRUNSWICK ROAD/SUTTON WAY INTERSECTION

Work on relocation of the signal pole and electrical equipment started during the week of March 5<sup>th</sup>. Widening of the roadway and paving are scheduled to be done during April and May.

6. BICYCLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE (Mike Woodman-Project Manager)

Nevada County Transportation Commission's (NCTC) consultant, Alta Planning + Design, have completed their review of the background documents and existing bicycle network inventory. They are currently preparing maps of the existing and previously planned bicycle facilities. Public workshops are scheduled to be held by the consultant on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Truckee Town Hall Council Chambers from 6:30 P.M. to 8:00 P.M., and on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Grass Valley City Hall in the Hullender Room from 6:30 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. These workshops will include a presentation regarding the Bicycle Master Plan Update process, and will provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions and make suggestions regarding the plan and specific bike facilities needed in Nevada County.

An online Bicycle Survey is being conducted as part of the development of the Nevada County Bicycle Master Plan and can be found on the NCTC website by using the following link to the survey: <http://www.nctc.ca.gov/nctcflow/poll.pdf>

Completion of this planning effort will make the bicycle facilities identified in the unincorporated area of Nevada County, City of Grass Valley, City of Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee eligible for State Bicycle Transportation Account grant funding. This competitive statewide grant program has a funding level of approximately \$5,000,000 available in FY 2007-2008.

7. TRANSIT TRANSFER FACILITY SITE LOCATION STUDY (Mike Woodman-Project Manager)

In February, NCTC staff received five proposals to conduct the study to identify and evaluate several candidate locations for a new Gold Country Stage transit transfer facility, and to develop a preliminary design for the facility. A selection committee reviewed the proposals and chose three firms to participate in oral interviews conducted on February 14<sup>th</sup>. The firm, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., was awarded the contract.

An initial project kick-off meeting with the Ad Hoc Project Advisory Committee is scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The study is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2007.

8. FISCAL YEAR 2006/07 TRANSIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (Mike Woodman-Project Manager)

In response to concerns the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) funding recommended for the SR 49 Widening (La Barr Meadows Road) project, and other rural connectivity projects may be in jeopardy of losing funding due to lobbying by the larger urban counties, the Executive Director redirected staff's priorities to address this issue. NCTC staff spent time attending meetings in Sacramento regarding the CMIA recommendations, coordinating CMIA efforts on behalf of the Rural Counties Task Force (RCTF), and traveling to Irvine to address the California Transportation Commission as Chair of the RCTF.

Therefore, due to the associated staff time constraints, preparation of the Nevada County Transit Needs Assessment was delayed and will not be presented to the Commission until its May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.